

in the latter half—and in its tone, it has close affiliations with the Socialist-political works

That "tone" deserves a word. It is more authoritative, more dogmatic, slightly louder than of old. To some extent, the "unassuming expert" has, for the nonce, been replaced by the positive propagandist. The narrative method is brighter, particularly in *The Decay* there are resemblances in phrasing to the subsequently published

My Apprenticeship (1926) that suggest that Mrs Webb, rather more often than is elsewhere usual, has held as well as guided the pen. But the true reason may very well be no more than the shift from the heaped-up material that had to be coped with in the earlier books, to the freer stage of individual expression of opinion, and individual planning of action. Anyhow, it is to these three books that any would-be defender of democracy may go for the best and most cogent, as well as far the most complete, argument, for it that has been set out in our time.

Convinced democrats, they had believed, up to the outbreak of the war, that the large scale social and economic changes that had got to take place if formal were to be translated into social democracy, were progressively being brought about. The logic of efficiency dictated Collectivism: the forms of collective control were being forged by the Trade Unions and the Co-operative Societies, by the steady expansion of local government, and by the marked development of the Social services. They saw themselves as the Benthamites of a later epoch,

permeating and con-
 verting permeating and converting above
 all, the key
 people and the key positions To this entire
 outlook, the
 war came as a deep and far-reaching shock
 The very fact
 that they accepted the current views as to its
 inevitability,
 as to the necessity of fighting and fighting to the
 bitter end,
 compelled them to admit into their scheme of
 things forces
 and factors—irrational, dangerous, largely
 evil, horribly